

Children are to get a chance to learn music in the English choral tradition as part of plans by the Church of England to inspire young people to learn about the Christian faith, it was announced today.



A total of £249,530 has been awarded to The Church of England in Lancashire to invest in up to 24 "Choir Churches" where children will be taught hymns and anthems from the English choral tradition, meeting as a new congregation of parents, teachers and the wider community.

The Choir Church initiative in the Diocese of Blackburn will include regular worship and will be formed following similar projects in east London parishes and schools, led by Tom Daggett of the Choir Church Foundation.

The Bishop of Burnley, Philip North said: "This is a fantastic initiative; we are delighted to be pioneering Choir Church in our Diocese on a scale never before attempted."

"With our Choir Church Project we aim to connect home, church and school in a fresh approach to outreach; providing opportunities in places where they may not be available otherwise."

Innovation Funding is aimed at helping parishes explore new ways of sharing the Christian message alongside tried and tested approaches.

Dioceses are encouraged to apply for funding for projects lasting up to three years that could act as blueprints for future mission and growth across the country,

A total of £1.7 million been awarded in Innovation Funding round for the following projects:

• Birmingham, Safe Spaces helping churches in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, particularly inner city and outer estates, to nurture the faith and ensure they can welcome young people who have had no previous contact with Christianity - £239,775

• Blackburn Choir Church, up to 24 Choir Churches working with schools in parishes across the diocese - £249,530

• Bristol Swindon New Town for a project to adapt successful outreach approach, into a traditional Catholic parish - £249,690

• London Youth Ministry in Communion, to expand on a youth network in the Anglo Catholic tradition, started last year (currently involving nine parishes in London) - £250,000

• Royal School of Church Music Hymnpact to help fund a programme to nurture faith through singing and appreciation of hymns and spiritual songs in schools in partnership with a range of churches - £230,000

• Southwark Bubble Church- funding to expand Sunday worship that is friendly for parents and children with no previous contact with the church - £250,000

• St Hild College Seedbed - training for lay people to evangelise and plant churches - £223,666

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